

NEBRASKA STATE FIRE MARSHAL OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION



Interpretation Number: 09-01

Date: 04-10

Pamphlet Number: NFPA 101 (2000)
NFPA 13 (1999)

Section(s): (101) 18.3.5, 19.3.5
(13) A-5-13.9.2

Comments:

Replaces previous interpretation dated 08-09.

Applies to wardrobes and closets where clothes or personal effects can be hung on hangers.

Question: What are the fire sprinkler requirements for wardrobes and closets in health care occupancies?

Response: Closets and built-in wardrobes are required to be fire sprinkler protected within the unit.

Free standing wardrobes are not required to have fire sprinkler protection inside the unit, but fire sprinkler protection must be provided within the room to cover the floor area of the wardrobe. Sprinkler heads providing protection for these units shall not be obstructed by privacy curtains or similar obstructions.

The following definitions apply:

Closets are considered part of the building structure. The walls, ceiling and floor of which are generally made of the same construction materials as the building.

Built-in wardrobes are generally not constructed of the same materials as the building, but are built into the building. A built-in wardrobe is attached directly to the building structural members such as wall studs without sheathing (drywall) between the wardrobe and the wall studs.

Free standing wardrobes are not constructed of the same materials as the building and are not part of the structure. A free standing wardrobe is considered a piece of furniture. The wardrobe can be attached to the wall and/or recessed into an alcove. The key is that the wall the wardrobe is attached to and the walls and ceiling of the alcove the wardrobe is recessed into are fully sheathed.

Signature:

Date: 4-15-10

Title: John E. Falgione, State of Nebraska Fire Marshal